*Students will demonstrate knowledge of assessment issues and perform qualitative and quantitative assessments of children and their environments.*

An assessment is a way of determining what is best for an individual or group, for viewing progress or growth, and for evaluating how groups (ex. students, schools, districts) compare with their peers. In the past I didn’t really know what an assessment was but I was never a fan of the standardized testing that I had to take every year. After taking the courses: Access and Equity in Education, Assessment Issues for Children and Families, Methods of Inquiry in Child Development, Observational Techniques, and the Child Development Practicum, I learned what assessments were, who they were for, and what the rules associated with assessment were.

Assessments can be taken by individuals or groups of people and some places assessments can be taken are in schools, in the workplace, and in government programs. Different types of assessments include interviews, observations, portfolios, case studies, and tests. Two of the most important factors of testing are validity and reliability. Validity occurs when a test is adequately used for what it was designed to be used for. One of the most important types of validity is construct validity which is when the assessment measures what it claims to measure. Reliability means that the same results will occur if retested (consistency). After taking the course, Methods of Inquiry in Child Development, I learned from the professor that “It can be reliable without being valid, but it can’t be valid without being reliable,” a concept that I struggled with.

While previously taking an Assessment Issues for Children and Families course, I completed an environmental assessment using the CLASS assessment scoring system. The areas that CLASS focuses on are: positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for student perspective, behavior management, productivity, instructional learning formats, concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling. Using the CLASS assessment for that course, allowed me to have a valuable learning opportunity that I can apply in the future when assessing a classroom environment.

In Methods of Inquiry in Child Development, I wrote a research paper on the effects of poverty and low-socioeconomic status on academic performance of children. The assessment that I included in that paper was the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), a 72-question rating scale that measures how aware children are of social and emotional regulations. The knowledge that I have acquired on the topic of assessments has come from taking many courses in child development.